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The National Avalanche Center

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U.S.D.A.
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Wasatch Cache
National Forest



Every winter people lose their lives to avalanches while recreating on National Forest lands.

The National Avalanche Center

Millions of people visit the mountains on National Forest System lands each winter. Most of these winter visitors enjoy their stay and return home to tell friends and family about beautiful mountains and how much fun they had skiing, snowmobiling, snowboarding, snowshoeing or climbing. Unfortunately, the combination of mountains, snow and people are also the ingredients of disaster—avalanches.

An average of seventeen people lose their lives to avalanches each year in the United States. This is more than are killed by hurricanes, earthquakes or any other slope failure hazard. Most of those killed are recreating on National Forest Systems lands.

The Forest Service created the National Avalanche Center to save lives by providing avalanche education, facilitating research, and transferring state-of-the-art technology to professionals involved in avalanche forecasting and control.



The NAC facilitates the transfer of international avalanche technology to American Avalanche workers. This reduces avalanche accidents at ski areas and on highway and railroads.



The NAC offers customized avalanche classes to Forest Service personnel and the public.

National Avalanche Center

The National Avalanche Center provides the following services and products:

Avalanche Education

The NAC teaches avalanche courses to Forest Service personnel and to the local public as a community service. We customize classes to your needs and can provide avalanche education ranging from one-hour avalanche awareness talks to intensive, multi-day workshops. Most classes focus on developing practical, non-technical avalanche skills such as terrain analysis, snow stability analysis, safe travel, and self-rescue. We teach these classes using entertaining multi-media presentations which include videos, slides, and hands-on models of the avalanche phenomenon.

Video Education Products

The NAC has developed and will continue developing video education products for the recreational public and avalanche control professionals. We have produced a one-hour avalanche safety video for backcountry travellers which is available for national distribution. We are also producing two 10-minute videos, one designed for snowboarders and the other for snowmobilers. An avalanche control training video is being developed for use at ski areas, highway departments, helicopter skiing operations, and any other organization using explosives for avalanche control.

Consultation

The NAC offers guidance for solving avalanche-related problems including:

- Establishment and operation of avalanche advisory programs.
- Identification and mitigation of avalanche hazards to people or structures.
- Development of avalanche safety plans for winter sports areas, snowcat and helicopter ski operations, and other winter recreation permits.
- Assessment of new ski area permits or existing ski area expansions.
- Computer applications for avalanche forecasting and data exchange.



The NAC is developing training videos designed specifically for skiers, snowmobilers, and snowboarders.

Military Weapons for Avalanche Control

The NAC oversees and manages military weapons used for avalanche control at Forest Service permitted ski areas. The NAC will train military weapons gunners and provide on-site military weapons use consultation.

Research Facilitation

The NAC coordinates the exchange of information from other avalanche organizations such as the National Avalanche Foundation, American Association of Avalanche Professionals, National Ski Patrol, and International Snow Science Workshops. The NAC also disseminates avalanche research and forecasting software from other countries to American avalanche workers, and facilitates technical exchanges between foreign and American avalanche researchers.

In 1991, the NAC established a cooperative agreement between U.S. and Japanese scientists. This has allowed Japanese scientists, in conjunction with the University of Utah, the Center for Snow Science at Alta and the NAC, to conduct ongoing research on avalanche impact pressures at Alta. The NAC also sponsors technical exchanges between American and Japanese avalanche specialists, and observation visits by avalanche scientists from foreign countries such as Japan, Scotland, Austria and Canada. During these visits, scientists and practitioners exchange ideas on avalanche forecasting and control techniques with Forest Service Avalanche Forecasters, Forest Service Snow Rangers, Departments of Transportation, and ski area snow safety departments.



The NAC manages the military weapons program at Forest Service permitted ski areas — keeping avalanche control safe and effective.



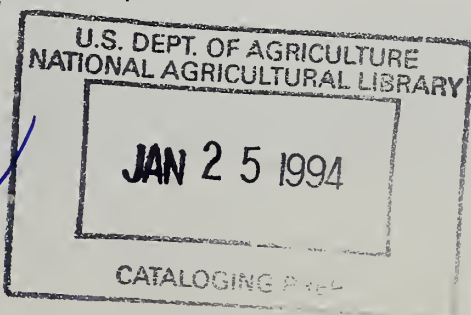
State-of-the-art technology is aiding avalanche professionals in forecasting avalanche hazards.

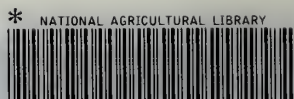


Most avalanche accidents are triggered by the victim; avalanche education is a critical step in preventing avalanche fatalities.

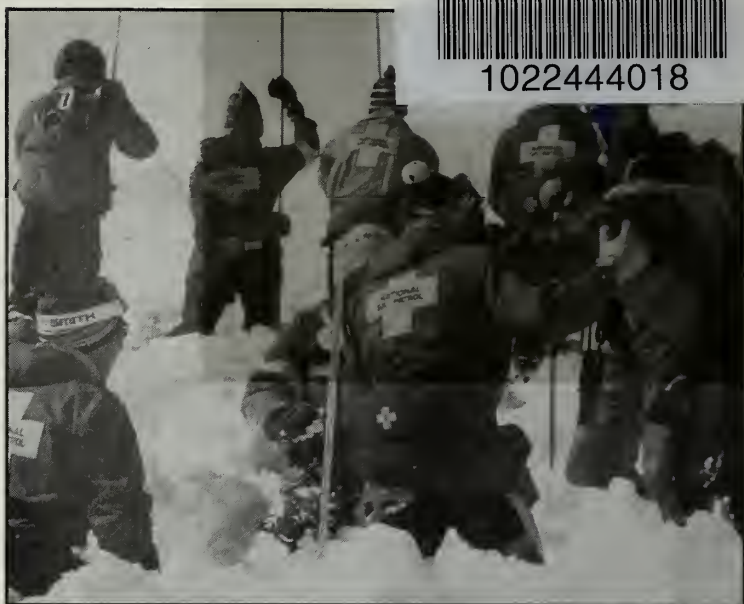
Benefits of the NAC

- Reduces the annual death toll from avalanche accidents in the U.S. by developing avalanche education material and the establishing avalanche forecast centers.
- Distributes state-of-the-art avalanche technology and research to avalanche professionals.
- Improves public safety by assessing avalanche hazards at Forest Service permitted ski areas, helicopter skiing, and snowcat skiing operations.
- Maintains safe and effective avalanche control by managing the Forest Service military weapons program.
- Increases national and international understanding of avalanche phenomenon by facilitating avalanche research and avalanche technology transfer between countries, agencies and private entities.





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*The NAC offers consultation services
on any avalanche related problem.*

PRIMARY STAFF:

The National Avalanche Center is based in Salt Lake City and is staffed by:

Doug Abromeit, Program Director: R04F19D01A

Bruce Tremper: R04F19D01A

REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES:

Regional avalanche specialists representing the NAC include:

Karl Birkeland: R01F11A (Regions 1 and 9)

Jim Hackett: R02F04D05A (Regions 2 and 3)

Dave Ream: R04F19D01A (Region 4)

Bob Moore: R05F17D57A (Region 5)

Mark Moore: R06F05A (Regions 6 and 10)

Staff specialties include: avalanche education, avalanche forecasting, avalanche hazard analysis, avalanche meteorology, computer applications for avalanche problems and military weapons.

The NAC views all Forest Service, universities, departments of transportation and ski industry avalanche professionals as part of the pool of expertise available to the NAC. The staff's goal is to create a sense of synergy among the entire avalanche community and to facilitate solutions to avalanche related problems by utilizing the expertise within the community.

For inquiries concerning any avalanche related problems or requests for avalanche awareness classes, avalanche videos or other assistance, please call Doug Abromeit or Bruce Tremper at (801) 943-1794 or 943-1798 or contact them or any of the regional representatives via DG.